(d) whether he has expressed his views against the formalities of the police verification report to be obtained before the issue of passport, recently;

(e) whether character verification is to be done after twenty years at the time of renewal of the passport instead of after every ten years as per the previous policy; and

(f) if so, the details thereof and the steps proposed to be taken to ensure that the passport is issued after due character verification?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI I.K. GUJRAL) : (a) and (b). Yes, Sir. On 9th September, 1996, the Government announced a new policy to issue passports for 20 years at a time which has received a favourable response from the public. However in view also of the continued interest and demand for obtaining 10 year validity passports, this policy was modified and an option was given to applicants to apply for either a 10 year validity passport on payment of the existing fee of Rs. 300 or a 20 year validity passport on payment of fee of Rs. 600. The salient features of the new policy after the modification are as follows :-

(i) For fresh applicants not holding passports, the normal procedure would continue to be followed and a passport valid for 10 years or 20 years, as applied for, will be issued to them subject to clear police verification report or if no report is received for four weeks, on a presumption of clearance on a post-verification basis, without waiting for the report.

(ii) For applicants already holding valid passports or whose passports are expiring within one year and who are seeking their re-issue, new passports valid for 10 years or 20 years, as the case may be, will be issued to them without prior police verification, but on post verification basis;

(iii) At the expiry of the said period of 10 years or 20 years in (i) & (ii) above, the passport holder will be re-issued a passport for 10 years or 20 years also on post verification basis.

(iv) In cases where passports have been submitted after one or more years of its expiry, a new passport valid for 10 or 20 years can be issued on post verification basis, condoning the gap.

(c) India is the only country now issuing passports valid for 20 years at a time.

(d) Yes, Sir. I have stated that prior police verification will no longer be a precondition for the issue/re-issue of a passport as outlined in para (i) and (ii) of parts (a&b) above.

(e) and (f). Necessary Verification is carried out at each point when a passport is issued/re-issued and this provides ample safeguard. Under the new policy, while the verification in respect of all those who are already holding a valid passport is done after a passport is re-issued to them, in the caso of those applying for the first time, a passport is issued only after their personal particulars have been sent to the concerned police authorities for necessary verification. Moreover, as an additional safeguard where passports are issued on post verification basis, care has been taken to ensure that in all those cases where adverse/negative reports are received from police authorities after issue/re-issue of passports, necessary action to impound/revoke the passports could be taken under the Provisions of the Indian Passports Act, 1967.

Pak's Missile Plant

2438. SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to a report published in the Indian Express, New Delhi, dated August 26, 1996 under the caption "Pakistan secretly building missile plant";

(b) if so, the facts in this regard;

(c) the number of M-11 missiles and the details of the other war material received from China and other countries by Pakistan during each of the last three years; and

(d) the steps taken, so far, by the Government to safeguard India's security and interests?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI I.K. GUJRAL) : (a) to (c). Yes, Sir. Government have seen the press report in this regard Government have been aware of Pakistan's attempts to build a missile plant with Chinese assistance and consider it a matter of great concern. Our concern regarding Pakistan's acquisition of M-11 Missiles and other armaments have also been conveyed to the concerned countries. There have been media reports that the number of M-11 missiles acquired by Pakistan range Between 75 to 100. The statement regarding certain categories of conventional weapons acquired by Pakistan during 1992-95, as indicated in the UN Arms Register is enclosed.

(d) The acquisition of weapons by Pakistan and its impact on the security environment is kept under constant review. The Government remain committed to taking all necessary steps to safeguard its security.

STATEMENT

Arms Imported by Pakistan and Declared in the UN Register of Conventional Arms

1. Calendar Year 1992

(a) 97 Battle Tanks from China.

2. Calendar Year 1993

(a) 35 Battle Tanks from China.

(b) 40 Combat Aircraft from China.

(c) 2 Warships from United Kingdom.

3. Calendar Year 1994

(a) 82 Battle Tanks from China.

(b) 2 Attack Helicopters from United Kingdom.

(c) 4 Warships from United Kingdom.

(d) 1 Warship from Netherlands.

4. Calendar Year 1995

(a) 51 Battle Tanks from China.

(b) 20 Armoured Combat Vehicles from China.

(c) 1 Attack Helicopter from United Kingdom.

Threat to India's Security due to Afghan Situation

2439. SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA :
SHRI T. GOPAL KRISHNA :

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether attention of the Government has been drawn to the news item captioned "Taliban on rampage holds many terrors for India" which appeared in Indian Express dated October 5, 1996;

(b) whether there is any adverse impact on India's security due to change of Government in Afghanistan; and

(c) if so, the details thereof and the steps taken/ proposed to be taken by the Government to meet the increased threat to country's security?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI I.K. GUJRAL) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c). Government continues to follow developments in Afghanistan very closely and evaluate their implications for us. There have been recent credible reports in the international media on the Taliban handing over terrorist training facilities to the Harkat-ul-Ansar. It is reported that at their training camps, Pakistani and other youth are being trained for terrorist activities in Kashmir.

Government continues to maintain its vigil and is taking all necessary steps to safeguard the country's security.

Credibility of Indian Air Force

2440. SHRI TARIQ ANWAR : Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is fact that Indian Air Force is gradually

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the corrective steps taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI N.V.N. SOMU) : (a) to (c). The concept of a 'lean and mean' force is the ultimate objective of the IAF, since it enables economy in scale of deployment of available forces to get still better results. This has been translated into practice, in terms of planning for modernisation of the IAF, by undertaking mid-life upgradation of existing weapon systems with sophisticated systems, acquisition of modern and Electronic warfare armour and provision of Precision Guided Munitions.

Selection of Candidates for the Post of Principal in KVs

2441. SHRIMATI GEETA MUKHERJEE : Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state :

(a) whether departmental candidates applying for the post of Principal in Kendriya Vidyalayas must have 15 years teaching experience as PGT or they should clear departmental test;

(b) if so, whether OBC candidates have been exempted from clearing the said departmental test;

(c) if not, whether some OBC candidates have been selected for the post of Principal last year though they neither had 15 years experience nor had cleared the test;

(d) if so, the facts and reasons therefor; and

(e) the corrective measures being taken in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI MUHI RAM SAIKIA): (a) In accordance with the recruitment rules of Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan, Vice-Principal and/or Post Graduate Teachers of Kendriya Vidyalayas with 15 years service as such and Vice-Principal and/or Post Graduate Teachers with 10 years service and have passed the Departmental examination are eligible for the post of Principal in Kendriya Vidyalayas.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) to (a). A complaint has been received which is under investigation.

[Translation]

Irrigation Problems in Southern-Bihar

2442. SHRI R.L.P. VERMA : Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government are aware of the irrigation